

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Mar 17th 2015

The readings for today centered on the healing hand of God made manifest in different ways in the Old and New Testament. The healing waters in the Old Testament are much more symbolic while the Jesus' healing of the crippled beggar is quite straight forward. The responsorial psalm between the two, reminds us of God as our refuge and strength and of His constant presence.

I found the first reading quite challenging and had to read it many times. To understand all the symbolism, I read about Ezekiel and his various visions – that helped a great deal to see the meaning in the various images presented in this verse. I did know that water is an important symbol in so many of our readings and in our understanding of purifying and healing. Another prophet, Zechariah prophesied of that day of the Lord when “living waters shall go out from Jerusalem” (Zech. 14:8). Reading about that helped to make more sense out of this reading. Jesus is our living water (didn't Jesus say that to the woman at the well?) and He will flow – a small stream at first – water that we can wade in – then the depth increases so that we can no longer walk. So. . . I see this as the water with which we are first baptized. Throughout our lives we are exposed more and more as we open our hearts to Jesus and the depth of that water increases as the depth of our faith increases. When we allow the “living water” to be a part of our lives we certainly do swim. We swim toward that ocean of healing that is purified by the presence of Jesus Christ. I think that the water starting as a trickle is also symbolic of Jesus and His influence (as seen in the gospel) – as His ministry grew so does the flow of the water. Once all the apostles are involved after His crucifixion, the flow is even greater as more and more are converted and with one heart spread the word of the living Christ. And now is our opportunity to continue that flow “to the ends of the earth.”

The responsorial psalm has a simple message: God is with us always. The first line says it so beautifully –

God is our refuge and our strength,

an ever-present help in distress.

There is no doubt that we do not go through this life alone. Over and over again, I see evidence (living proof) that our journey is one with a constant companion – a loving God who enfolds us in His arms – in the good times and in the challenging ones. Whether it is the story of footprints in the sand or just our own lived experience, we know we are not alone in this journey.

Our gospel shares one of the many miracles that Jesus performed. I always am in awe that as Jesus performs all these miracles, there were still people who do not believe even though they were right there! In our lives now, we, no doubt, see miracles, yet we do not always see (or believe) the hand of God in them. For us, it is our faith that supports us in believing these miracles. We are not usually

standing there while it happens and certainly not alongside Jesus as He performs such actions. Yet, I assert that we have miracles every day – I'll conclude with the chorus from What Faith Can Do by Kutless:

I've seen dreams that move the mountains

Hope that doesn't ever end

Even when the sky is falling

I've seen miracles just happen

Silent prayers get answered

Broken hearts become brand new

Yeah, that's what faith can do.

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